

**U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management  
White River Field Office  
220 E Market St  
Meeker, CO 81641**

## **FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)**

### **Northern Piceance Fuels Reduction Project DOI-BLM-CO-N05-2015-0052-EA**

#### **Background**

The BLM is proposing to treat vegetation across the Northern Piceance Fuels Reduction Project Area using prescribed fire, mechanical methods, and seeding to restore the landscape to its desired plant community while specifically reducing fuel loading and reducing pinyon-juniper encroachment into sagebrush disclimax parks. A single treatment method may be used within a site or a combination of treatment methods.

#### **Finding of No Significant Impact**

Based upon a review of the EA and the supporting documents, I have determined that the Proposed Action will not have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment, individually or cumulatively with other actions in the general area. No environmental effects meet the definition of significance in context or intensity, as defined at 40 CFR 1508.27 and do not exceed those effects as described in the White River Resource Area Proposed Resource Management Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement (1996). Therefore, an environmental impact statement is not required. This finding is based on the context and intensity of the project as described below.

#### **Context**

The project is a site-specific action directly involving BLM administered public lands that do not in and of itself have international, national, regional, or state-wide importance. Within the Northern Piceance Fuels Reduction Project there are multiple oil and gas infrastructure, nahcolite mining operations, oil shale research tracts, livestock grazing, range improvement projects, recreational activities such as OHV use and hunting, as well as the Piceance-East Douglas Herd Management Area.

## ***Intensity***

The following discussion is organized around the 10 Significance Criteria described at 40 CFR 1508.27. The following have been considered in evaluating intensity for this Proposed Action:

**1. Impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse.**

The benefit of the reduction of hazardous fuels and reducing pinyon-juniper encroachment is high. The adverse effects of fuels reduction may potentially remove pollinator habitat and nesting sites causing indirect impacts to certain species.

**2. The degree to which the Proposed Action affects public health or safety.**

Reducing fuels allows fire personnel to have more control over the management of wildfires and improves the ability to protect life and property

**3. Unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity to historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas.**

Within the project area there are numerous cultural resources. These will be mitigated through multiple design features and mostly avoided.

**4. Degree to which the possible effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial.**

The Proposed Action poses a very low effect on the human environment. The project is not controversial. The hazardous fuels reduction program is in wide use in the WRFO and across the nation, for the protection of resources.

**5. Degree to which the possible effects on the quality of the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risk.**

No highly uncertain or unknown risks to the human environment were identified during analysis of the Proposed Action.

**6. Degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration.**

The Proposed Action neither establishes a precedent for future BLM actions with significant effects nor represents a decision in principle about a future consideration. The process for fuels treatments is outlined in the 1997 WRFO RMP (page 2-12).

**7. Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts.**

The Proposed Action is similar to that of the Southern Piceance Fuels Reduction Project with the overall objective of reducing hazardous fuels within the WRFO.

**8. The degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed on the National Register of Historic Places or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources.**

Cultural sites will be identified prior to any treatment and will be avoided.

**9. The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973.**

No listed species or their habitat will be adversely affected as a result of this Proposed Action.


**10. Whether the action threatens a violation of Federal, State, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.**

Neither the Proposed Action nor impacts associated with it violate any laws or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.

**Signature of Authorized Official**

  
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Field Manager

  
\_\_\_\_\_

Date

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## **DECISION RECORD**

### **Northern Piceance Fuels Reduction Project DOI-BLM-CO-N05-2015-0052-EA**

#### **Decision**

It is my decision to implement the Proposed Action as mitigated in DOI-BLM-CO-N05-2015-0052-EA, authorizing the use of hazardous fuels reduction treatments in the Northern Piceance project area.

#### **Mitigation Measures**

Design features that minimize impacts from the project have been incorporated into the Proposed Action.

#### **Compliance with Laws & Conformance with the Land Use Plan**

This decision is in compliance with the Endangered Species Act and the National Historic Preservation Act. It is also in conformance with the 1997 White River Record of Decision/Approved Resource Management Plan.

#### **Environmental Analysis and Finding of No Significant Impact**

The Proposed Action was analyzed in DOI-BLM-N05-2015-0052-EA and it was found to have no significant impacts, thus an EIS is not required.

#### **Public Involvement**

This project was posted on the WRFO's on-line National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) register on 5/21/2015. No comments or inquiries have been received.

#### **Monitoring and Compliance**

On-going compliance inspections and monitoring will be conducted by White River Field Office staff after completion of any fuels reduction treatment within the Northern Piceance. Monitoring

will be comprised of but not limited to noxious weeds, erosion potential, and treatment effectiveness.

### **Rationale**

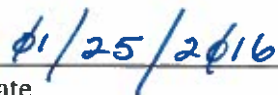
Analysis of the Proposed Action has concluded that there are no significant negative impacts and that it meets Colorado Standards for Public Land Health. Reducing fuel loads helps implement decisions from both the RMP and FMP regarding the management of wildfires.

### **Administrative Remedies**

Any appeal of this decision must follow the procedures set forth in 43 CFR Part 4. Within 30 days of the decision, a Notice of Appeal must be filed in the office of the Authorized Officer at White River Field Office, 220 East Market St., Meeker, CO 81641 with copies sent to the Regional Solicitor, Rocky Mountain Region, 755 Parfet St., Suite 151, Lakewood, CO 80215, and to the Department of the Interior, Board of Land Appeals, 801 North Quincy St., MS300-QC, Arlington, VA, 22203. If a statement of reasons for the appeal is not included with the notice, it must be filed with the Interior Board of Land Appeals at the above address within 30 days after the Notice of Appeal is filed with the Authorized Officer.

### **Signature of Authorized Official**

  
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Field Manager

  
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Date

